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CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE AGENCY  
OFFICE OF NATIONAL ESTIMATES

17 January 1957

STAFF MEMORANDUM NO. 5-57

SUBJECT: Estimative Support for Proposed NSC Review of US Middle East Policy

1. The Chairman of the Planning Board has warmly supported the recommendation of a 22 December OCB Progress Report on the Near East that NSC 5428 be reviewed as early as circumstances permit and plans to ask the NSC at its 24 January meeting to authorize early commencement of such an exercise. He has already requested an NIE in support of this exercise, but has vouchsafed no guidance other than "we want the facts."

2. Although many aspects of the evolving Middle East situation are already the subject of extensive coverage of NIE's and other intelligence media, they cannot easily be used in support of the present Planning Board exercise. On the other hand, we believe it would be undesirable to attempt another detailed and laborious survey of the area of the sort [REDACTED] remarks might seem to suggest. We are also persuaded that a consequences-of-possible-US-courses-of-action paper would be difficult to carry off productively in view of the probable inability of the policy-side people to give us early specific guidance.

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3. We therefore recommend that specific estimative support for the NSC 5428 review be provided in the form of a relatively short SNE which would provide an analysis of the major trends

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and forces in the area affecting US interests and policies and which would be specifically designed as a contribution to the "General Considerations" section of the new Middle East policy paper. [REDACTED] has requested that various studies, including the NIE, be ready by 1 March.

4. The paper we have in mind should concentrate on long-term trends rather than attempt to estimate the likelihood and nature of imminent crises. Thus it should eschew as far as possible consideration of such matters as the imminence of a coup in Syria, the specific terms under which ships will resume transit of the canal, etc.

5. Because of the short deadline, because the type of paper we have in mind will not require long, factual contributions, and because the major problem is one of organizing and drafting a think-piece type of paper, we suggest oral rather than written contributions. We would propose sending the attached T/R to the agencies in advance of an oral meeting to be held the latter part of next week. The remaining schedule would be:

Staff Draft	7 February
Board Draft to Reps	13 February
IAC Reps meeting	19 February
To IAC	26 February

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